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April 29, 1992

Harold Weisberg
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Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Enclosed is a check for \$40.00 for the books Post Mortem and Whitewash. If you could also send a listing of your other books and the prices I would appreciate it.

I talked with you on the phone approximately a week ago about the possibility of forming a national organization. A comment you made at that time has meant a lot to me. While the sixties do not get much favorable mention these days, I not only believe that those times were magical but that its spirit should and can be revived. That is my life's work and the reason I want a national organization. I believe that it could form the focal point for the emphasis of truth in our society.

Despite the enormous amount of reading and thinking I have done on this subject, there is always the nagging suspicion that the magic of the sixties was mostly the magic of youth (I am 44). Consequently, it was particularly satisfying to hear you say that those were also your favorite times, not only because of your age but because of who you are. The sixties were magical because it was a time when we believed in that better part of ourselves, when we had faith that truth, love and justice would prevail if only we retained our faith in it. And who better to hear that it was their favorite time than Harold Weisberg, the Don Quixote to the Warren Report. You fought it when practically no one was on your side, when your reward was public mockery. You did it, may I hazard to conjecture, not only because you knew it to be a lie but because you believed in the dream. Your comment that the sixties were your favorite time is one of those little nods of life that hint that I am on the right track. I thank you for it.

It was also comforting that you so quickly recognized that a national organization would be a good thing to create. I have not forgotten that you doubted that it could be done, but reality is reality. It will be difficult and I am as concerned about inertia (people react first to the person, not the idea and no one knows me) and fear of embarrassment (for many reasons) as I am about animosity amongst researchers. But I still believe that it can and

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will be done. I've taken the liberty of including the gist of a letter sent to a few other researchers. The perhaps overly dramatic flair is there because I am primarily concerned about inertia at the present time. I would deeply appreciate it if you could give me any advice or criticism.

Without going into all of the obvious and not so obvious reasons for the animosity between critics, it seems clear that a national organization would have to scrupulously avoid addressing the truth or falsehood of various assassination theories. This will be difficult, I understand, because many researchers are obsessed over the details of the assassination, the uncovering of which has been the life work for many of them. Yet if any national organization is to be attempted, it must be fully recognized from the outset that if the details of the assassination (other than in a generalized sense) become an issue, it is likely to engender severe disputes and might cause the organization to dissolve into several sub groups bitterly opposed to each other. Such a scenario would be clearly counterproductive and any objection to the formation of a national organization because of this danger is well taken. This problem should not, however, prevent the formation of a national organization. Rather it should guide us in our understanding as to what the proper role of a national organization should be.

A national organization should serve two roles: First, it should serve as a vehicle for those people who want to do something about the Kennedy assassination, yet do not have the time to become a researcher. Second, the organization should try to organize and mobilize that support, and that of the public at large, into forcing the government to initiate a new investigation, one that a majority of assassination critics could support. Naturally, in order to perform that second function it must reach an agreement on the form a new investigation should take.

I realize that many assassination critics do not want a new governmental investigation because they distrust the political process, believing that hostile political forces would inevitably co-opt it. I do not entirely disagree with this criticism. There has been so much political capital placed on the lone nut theory that powerful political interests would be loath to find a different conclusion even if they had nothing at all to do with the assassination itself. If a new investigation were proposed at the present time, I would not support it because assassination critics would necessarily have little power to influence it.

So long as the investigation of JFK is spearheaded by individuals, their ability to affect something as sophisticated as a congressional investigation is minimal. Whenever any governmental action is contrary to the views of the most knowledgeable critics,

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what can they presently do? Individual protests are basically ineffective because the press can choose to report whom they wish. If there is no united front, such criticisms can easily be made to seem like the grumblings of cranks.

But is that necessarily true if there is a national organization whose influence was responsible for bringing the investigation about in the first place? Singly, assassination critics can be portrayed as cranks, but as a group they could position themselves as the will of the people. The polls, after all, are on the critics' side. As I have written previously, the public attitude towards the Kennedy assassination is significantly different today. I believe that many Americans want something to be done. It is the leading critics responsibility to recognize this need and do something about it.

The problem with dozens of individualistic critics is that it squanders the potential for the development of positive public support. As every critic is fully aware, the press, in its criticism of them, can get away with the most puerile arguments. We need to turn these arguments against them which can only be effectively done if you are organized.

An excellent example of this is the major criticism made against the assassination critics. The dispute over Kennedy's death, these critics complain, has substantially eroded Americans' faith in their government. They believe this to be a great tragedy because they see no justifiable basis for this erosion and nothing, seemingly, that can be done about it. Another investigation, they claim, would be useless because no matter what is done, there would still be the same belief in a government coverup.

It is important to recognize that they are partially right. A new investigation by the government is not likely to help the public's trust of the government (regardless of outcome) when you have sixty to seventy major critics with seventy to eighty different ideas on how a proper investigation should be run. No matter what happens, it is likely that many will claim foul. Since everyone can agree that the people's erosion of faith in their government is a problem, we should all work together to resolve it. We should try to do everything we can to help the government regain the trust of its people by proposing an investigation that the people would trust. They should conduct a new investigation that is intimately connected to, and partially controlled by, the national organization that we should create.

A national organization should take the sensible position that it is unlikely that we will ever know all the details about the murder of JFK. But determining the identity of the guilty parties for certain is no longer the primary point. People are less bothered

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by the fact that we don't know who killed JFK than by the fact that, as a nation, we have not done everything we should have to find out. It is not the mystery that is so troublesome, it is the shame that comes from knowing that we haven't investigated the assassination as fully as we ought to have done.

Supporters of the Warren Commission would argue, of course, that everything has been done. However, even they have conceded that the public hasn't bought their position. We should sympathize with their plight and convince them that the best way for the public to appreciate their wisdom is by comparing their evidence with that which is produced by an investigation conducted by a national organization, funded, of course, by the government. Let us return to the adversarial system that is the basis of our jurisprudence.

There have been two previous investigations into the assassination of JFK and the vast majority of the country doesn't trust either one of them, believing that the truth about the assassination has been, partially at least, suppressed. The reason these investigations have not been accepted by the people is the fact that elements of the government itself have been suspect. The investigations have been conducted in secret utilizing experts appointed by the government while allowing the critics only limited input. Naturally, the critics would have done the investigations differently and have reported them accordingly. Any new investigation that ignores the critics will only produce more of the same. What possible point can be served in conducting an investigation which doesn't have the approval and support of the leading critics? What possible justification can be made to not conduct a new investigation when it is supported by a national organization, an entity that is no longer individual gunfighters but one that represents the will of the vast majority of the people?

What needs to be done is to allow a national organization to be intimately involved in the investigation with the power to appoint investigators, subpoena and cross examine witnesses and call its own experts. The public will trust an investigation only if such an organization exists, approves the investigation and has adequate power to assure that it is done properly. The government itself should have its own investigators and experts so that it would have ample opportunity to rebut anything that it deems necessary. By this manner, the country can be assured that we have finally done all that we can to learn what really happened on November 22, 1963.

While I have briefly outlined what I think a proper investigation should be, I fully recognize that a national organization, when it reviews the issue of the type of investigation that is necessary, may adopt a different plan. Many critics, I suspect, would find my suggestions politically unrealistic. Whatever plan would be

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adopted, however, must be complete and thorough. It will not do for a national organization to adopt a plan that it admits is inadequate simply because it is more likely to pass Congress. The whole argument must be based upon the attraction to the public of finally putting this matter to rest. We should not underestimate the political power of a national organization before we have even attempted to use it. Give the public the idea that this issue can be thoroughly investigated and then gauge their reaction.

In my opinion, the only reason the government has been able to suppress public support for a new investigation is the lack of a national organization promoting it and the generalized feeling that it will not make any difference. This feeling of helplessness is the true enemy of a legitimate investigation and it is that feeling that we should attempt to combat. Let us do a complete investigation not because we believe we will be able to prosecute the guilty parties, but because we hope to get this monkey off our collective backs.

Let us organize in order to promote a new investigation. The public intuitively recognizes that this issue can never be laid to rest until an investigation is conducted that will be acceptable to the leading critics. Such an investigation can never be made until we create a national organization. This organization only needs a substantial majority of the leading critics, not a hundred per cent approval, in order to gain sufficient credibility with the nation. The country needs this organization if it wants to have any hope of curing this national sore. It is the critics duty to provide it.

Since many of the critics have been laboring for twenty eight years on this issue, it would be understandable if there were some doubts as to how much actual support there is for a new investigation. While the numerous best sellers and television shows should provide a clue, it is more important to recognize that we will never discover how deeply that support runs until a national organization is created. How can you possibly know until the people are allowed an avenue to express that support? It may be far deeper than many critics imagine. Certainly, some effort should be made to find out.

There are a lot of unused resources in harnessing whatever support that does exist. At the conclusion of reading a Kennedy assassination book, many a reader wants to be able to do something about what they have read. Yet what can they do? If a national organization is created, then the books could contain a page informing the reader about the organization, what it is attempting to do and how they can join it. Then there are the lessons of Jerry Brown, an 800 number is not that expensive. A national organization might reach a formidable size very quickly. We cannot

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know the level of support until we try to reach it.

The time has come for assassination critics to realize that there is a need for them to assume a leadership role in this country. The country's interest has been deeply engaged on this issue and it is the leading critics responsibility, after having created this situation, to do everything in their power to see that this energy is directed into the kind of actions that will uncover as much of the truth as is humanly possible.

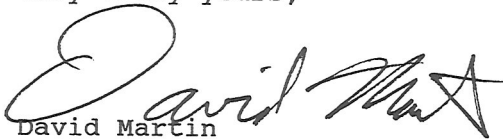
The alternative is to become part of the problem. One of the most distressing things about the issue of Kennedy's death is the thought that people could conspire to kill the President and that we, the people, could (or would) do nothing about it. It is that helplessness, that powerlessness, that is so vexing. If the people who have heroically kept this issue alive can't even form the will to attempt to organize the support that they have created, that only adds to the generalized despair created by the circumstances of Kennedy's death.

Democracy means that the average citizen is allowed power, but only on a conditional basis. Sometimes you have to take personal responsibility to try and change what is happening in your country. This, you have already done and I, amongst other Americans, are in your debt because without your, and your brethren's efforts, I would have let all this slide by. But a time also comes when individual action is no longer sufficient, there is a greater need to speak as single voice.

Organizing people with strong feelings and, I suspect, an anti-institution bias will admittedly be difficult, particularly since over the years bad blood has developed amongst several of its leading members. Yet I believe that the present situation requires such an effort. When we no longer have the will to band together on common issues, then we have lost faith with the ideals that gave birth to this country. Democracy is difficult; it requires that we be responsible for what happens to us, especially on those issues that our hearts tell us is most important.

I will call later. Thank you for the time you have spent reading this letter. Any comments you might have will be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,


David Martin